

Lettre de la Présidente

Spring 2005

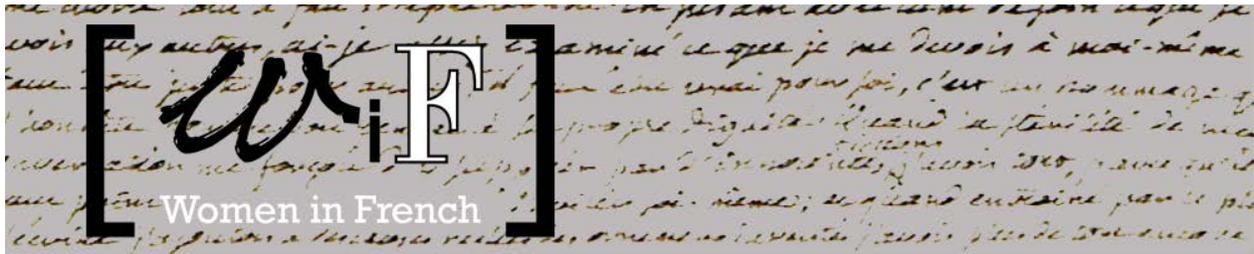
Dear Colleagues,

As we begin 2005, cataclysmic world events--chiefly the tsunami--evoke the scale of the “monumental time” to which Julia Kristeva refers in her essay “Le Temps des femmes.” Any attempt to make sense of 2004 in more mundane terms, even to give an account of WIF’s activities, can only pale in comparison. To paraphrase our former, inimitable secretary, Myrna Bell Rochester, WIF is like a flowing river. By the time you get it on paper, it has already changed.

As I reflect upon my first year as Chair, those kinds of cyclical changes come to the fore in what has been a year of transition for WIF, as a number of volunteers in essential positions have assumed responsibilities that others have relinquished after years of service. Martine Guyot-Bender and Cheryl Morgan, who replaced Maryann Golding as Newsletter Editors, have proved to be a superb team, as the following pages well attest. Sara Steinert Borella--after years of stellar service as listserve manager--has passed her duties on to Gay Rawson of Concordia. Gay is uniquely qualified for the position and already has both the main WIF list and pedagogy list up and running with Sara’s assistance. (wif@cord.edu and wifped@cord.edu)

The Executive Committee welcomes Lisa Algazi (Mid-Atlantic), Ruth Hottell (Great Lakes), and Helynn Hansen (Central and Rocky Mountain), who replace Margot Miller, Laura O’Meara, and Elizabeth Locey as representatives of their respective regions. Special thanks go to those outgoing members for their years of input into the vital business of the organization. Elizabeth Locey remains on the Committee as Secretary, a role she has capably filled since Myrna stepped down. I am especially grateful to our Vice Chair, Juliette Rogers. When an unexpected crisis kept me from attending MLA this year, Juliette stepped into the breach, seconded by the faithful Colette Trout and Cathy Yandell. I knew I could rely on all three to see that our annual Business Meeting was held at Philadelphia’s Caribou Café on December 28th. (See Minutes on p. 2). I truly regret having had to miss the meeting, as I had looked forward to seeing many of you there.

WIF, of course, functions best as a collaborative enterprise. Nowhere has this been more apparent to me this past year than in my work with Cathy Yandell, Frédérique Chevillot, and the contributors to the special volume of *Women in French Studies* that Cathy and I have edited: *Ecriture Courante: Perspectives on French and Francophone Women (Selected Essays from the WIF International Conference 2004)*. The essays in this issue have been reworked from papers presented at the Second International Women in French Conference and witness the depth and breadth of scholarship produced by members of our organization. It has been a particular privilege to collaborate with Cathy on this volume. Her keen sense of language, her own elegant prose style, and her expansive critical acumen all have enriched the volume. Above all, her



patience and sense of humor have lightened the work and kept the project moving forward. Frédérique, too, has combined her usual sage counsel and encouragement, attention to detail, and delightful wit to assure that we remain on track for publication early this year.

2005 also marks a transition for *Women In French Studies*. After her years of service as Editor, the valiant Frédérique has earned a respite and will step down at the end of this year and the enormous task she has accomplished for so long will be shared, with Catherine Montfort and Dawn Cornelio as Co-Editors of the *Studies*. Catherine will assume the role of Executive Editor and Dawn that of Production Editor, while Frédérique will remain as General Editor to oversee the smooth operation of the editorial team during this transition. Because, as Treasurer Christine Lac reports, the organization's finances are quite healthy, we can continue to look forward to the publication of two issues *WIF Studies* per year.

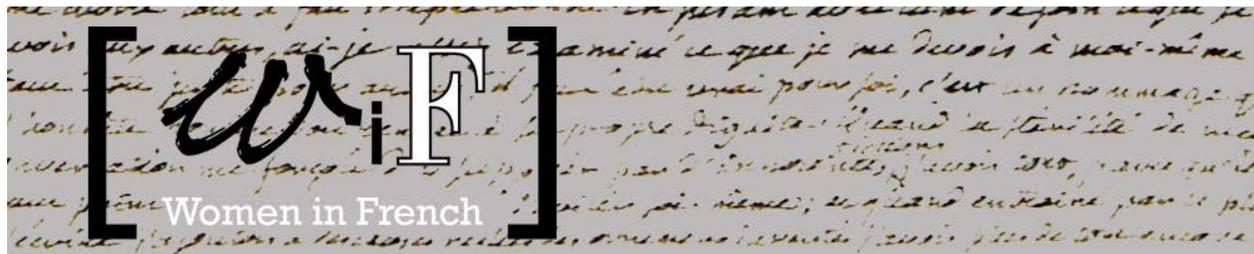
Lucy Schwartz, who again graciously agreed to tally the ballots for all votes, reports that the membership has voted for a change in the by-laws. As of 2006, the Executive Committee will include among its ranks a graduate student representative elected at large. The two sessions selected by vote for the 2005 MLA Covention in Washington D.C. are "Globalization and French/Francophone Literature," proposed by Florence Ramond Jurney, and "Sorties de secours: le conte de fées revisité par les écrivaines contemporaines," proposed by Catherine Poisson. Detailed calls for proposas are found on p. 11.

As far as our students are concerned, we need to congratulate Camille Dauphin-Persuy, student of Grace Armstrong at Bryn Mawr College, who has won the WIF graduate student award for her paper "L'aventure li manderai!": Désir de communication dans les *Lais* de Marie de France," and Erin MacDonald, student of Dawn M. Cornelio at the University of Guelph (Canada), who has won the undergraduate student award for her paper, "L'autofiction chez Camille Laurens." Congratulations to both students and both mentors.

Also included in this edition of the *Newsletter* are two fascinating bibliographies. The first, contributed by Bénédicte Monicat and Daniela Di Cecco, is entitled "Écrivaines pour la jeunesse." The second, on Indo-Mauritian writer Ananda Devi, is by Rohini Bannerje.

In addition to our publications and listserves, WIF depends on two electronic ressources to disseminate essentiel and timely information. The Directory of members, compiled by Roseanna Dufault and Karen Woodward, can be accessed via password through our website, which Nancy Virtue continues to manage with efficiency and grace. At the following address: www.ipfw.edu/ilcs/WIF/

Thanks to our dynamic Vice Chair, Juliette Rogers, plans are well under way for the Third International Women in French Conference to be held in April 2006 at the Unversity of New



Hampshire in Durham, where Juliette teaches. Juliette has laid much of the groundwork and further information will become available shortly.

2005 marks another important moment for us: WIF's status as an allied organization will be reviewed by the MLA, a process that last occurred in 1998. In the coming months, we'll be gathering documentation of our numerous activities since the last review in order to report them to the MLA.

I'd like to emphasize once more that WIF works best as a collaborative effort. The involvement of its members--sessions and papers at regional and national meetings, contributions to the *WIF Studies* and the *Newsletter*, recruiting colleagues, the work of all our volunteers—guarantees our continued vitality as a community of scholars. Thank you for all you do to contribute to that vitality.

Marie Rice-Defosse